

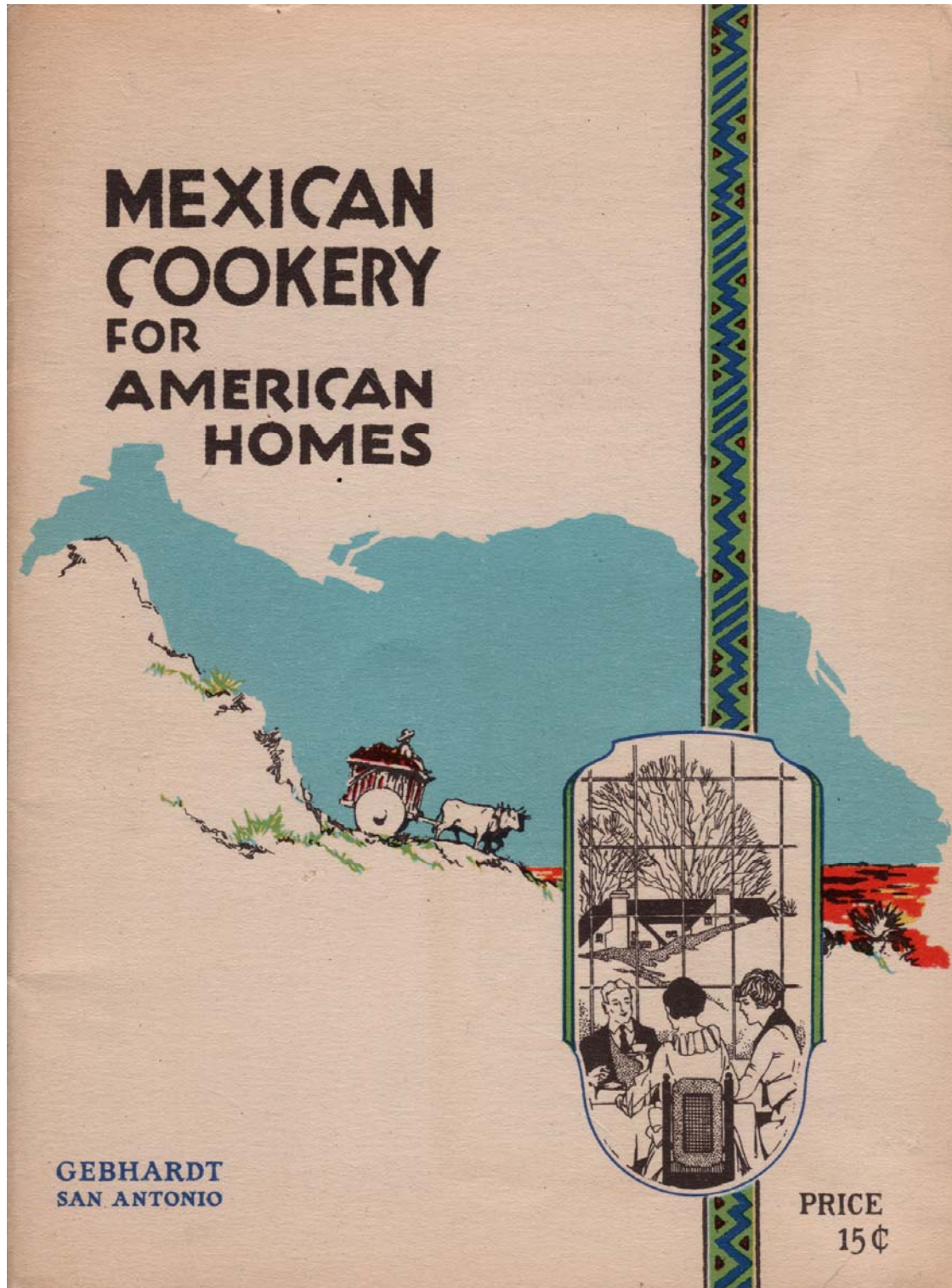


VOLUME XXIII, NUMBER 3 SUMMER 2007

# Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

## Foods of the American Heartland (Part 2)



Cover of a 1923 promotional booklet of recipes from the Gebhardt Chili Powder Co., San Antonio, Texas. Hanna Raskin's story about such booklets begins on page 7 inside.

Longone Center for American Culinary Research (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan)

# KAREN HESS, 1918-2007

by Jan Longone

Many tributes have appeared since the announcement of the death of Karen Hess. The culinary world will miss her exacting and thorough research relating to food history, especially to American culinary history.

Karen Lost (her name was pronounced CAR-inn, in the Scandinavian fashion) was born in the Danish immigrant town of Blair, Nebraska, on Nov. 11, 1918. The *New York Times* noted that she majored in music at San Jose State University, and met her future husband, John Hess, in San Francisco. Mr. Hess, a longshoreman, would later write for the *Times* for many years. It was after returning to America following a nine-year stint in Paris for the *Times*, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, that Karen and John became particularly interested in food and in what was happening to it, especially in the United States.

The result was their first book, *The Taste of America* (1977). This book had a major impact on those interested in American culinary history and was considered quite controversial. It was partially a jeremiad against many respected culinary authorities, including Craig Claiborne, Julia Child, and James Beard. But it also alerted America to much that it had lost, including the good taste of food and the pleasure of dining. The Hesses warned of the health consequences of industrialized foods and encouraged



Photo by Steven Mays, circa 1982

more farmers markets and inner-city greengrocers. Perhaps their lament was partially responsible for the positive steps now being taken in regards to food production and consumption.

In 1980 Karen wrote the introduction and notes for the American cook for Elizabeth David's masterpiece, *English Bread and Yeast Cookery*.

Karen next became interested in cookbooks from the American Colonial era and the Revolutionary War. One of her first works about the food of those times, an annotated version of *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery* (1981), is considered by many historians to be among her most important. This was followed by *Mary Randolph's Virginia Housewife* (1984). In 1992, Karen authored *The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection*, which contained a facsimile of a 1901 work published to encourage the local rice industry. In her dedication, Karen acknowledged all the African American women who created and developed recipes that found their way into the book.

Two additional facsimiles of classic American cookbooks appeared in 1995 and 1996, edited and/or with notes by Karen. In 1995, she edited an edition of *What Mrs. Fisher Knows about Old Southern Cooking*, originally published in 1881. Mrs. Fisher was born a slave; her book is one of the earliest African American cookbooks. In 1996, Karen edited a facsimile of the second edition of America's first cookbook, Amelia Simmons's *American Cookery* (1796).

We shall all, always be grateful to Karen for this remarkable body of literature on American culinary history. Although she was not a "trained" historian, she understood the importance of rigorous research using original documents. She helped develop the field of culinary history and encouraged many younger people to pursue it.

For many years, Karen had been working on a book about Thomas Jefferson and food. We can hope that someone will complete this project, thus adding another milestone to Karen's career. ■

## Repast

ISSN 1552-8863

Published quarterly by the  
Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor (CHAA)

<http://www.culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org>

Editor.....Randy K. Schwartz  
CHAA President.....Carroll Thomson  
CHAA Program Chair.....Julie Lewis  
CHAA Treasurer.....Dan Longone  
CHAA Founder and Honorary President...Jan Longone



*The material contained in this publication is copyrighted.  
Passages may be copied or quoted provided that the source is credited.*

Subscriptions are \$15/year (send a check or money order, made out to CHAA, to the address below). For information about memberships, subscriptions, or anything in this newsletter, contact:

Randy K. Schwartz  
1044 Greenhills Drive  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2722  
tel. 734-662-5040  
[Rschw45251@aol.com](mailto:Rschw45251@aol.com)

# CHAA WINTER PROGRAMS CELEBRATED LOCAL AND GLOBAL FOODS

After a semester of study abroad in Florence, Italy, in 2005, influenced by the local food ethic there, University of Michigan art students **Taylor Rutledge** and **Heather Leavitt** returned to Ann Arbor and resolved to collaborate on an art project that would raise public awareness of local food producers in southeastern Michigan. At the CHAA meeting on January 21, the young women described their successful project, “Raise Your Fork”, in which they designed, produced, and exhibited five elaborate tribute cakes, large, sculptural and magnificent yet fully edible. Besides cake itself, their works incorporated such ingredients as royal icing, fondant, ganache, gum paste, cheese, lemon curd, marzipan, doughnut, and Rice Krispie treats.

The five exhibition cakes were designed as celebrations of:

- Harnois Farm, which produces free-range, organic turkeys (both heritage and broad-breasted), as well as chickens and eggs
- Dexter Cider Mill, at age 121 the oldest operating cider mill in the state
- Durham’s Tricklements, which specializes in fine smoked seafood of many kinds
- Tantre Farm, a 40-acre community-supported organic farm growing potatoes, onions, squash, berries, and other produce
- Calder Dairy and Farm, a 100-cow family operation that makes and delivers Grade A milk, ice cream, and eggnog.

For the Jan. 21 talk, Taylor and Heather produced a wonderfully special cake to honor the CHAA itself, shaped and decorated to resemble such elements as a Culinary History tome, a turkey, and a champagne bottle. The cake was inspired by Nili Tannenbaum’s account of our first meeting in April 1983.

**Emily “Duff” Anderson**, a chocolate specialist at Zingerman’s Deli, presented “The History of Hot Chocolates and Cocos” on February 18. We learned that a gastronomic scene has lately sprung up around these drinks, which have long been eclipsed by the craze for solid chocolate. Duff showed us a sample cacao fruit, or pod, from Ecuador containing pulp and 20-40 high-fat seeds, or “beans”. Turning such beans into chocolate is a complex process in which they are fermented, dried, and roasted, she said. There are three main varieties of the plant, but handling and processing are the most important factors affecting the final product. Olmec, Maya, and Aztec peoples were the first to exploit this food source, and Columbus observed natives on Hispaniola using chocolate in his 1502 voyage. Mayans most often drank chocolate cold and bitter (not sweet), but flavored with flowers, chilies, seeds, and the like. It was a ritual beverage, reserved mostly for the elite. We tasted Duff’s adaptation of the pre-Columbian drink, which she made with 99% cacao, clover honey, chipotle peppers, and water.

Cacao plantations were maintained by all of the European colonial powers. The Spanish devised a hot chocolate beverage by adding milk, Old World spices, and other ingredients, and they invented a spindle to froth the drink. We tasted a Spanish version that Duff made with fine Enric Rovira drinking chocolate (imported from Barcelona) and milk. Italians have traditionally preferred delicate chocolate drinks perfumed with



University of Michigan art students **Taylor Rutledge** (left) and **Heather Leavitt** with their cake honoring CHAA. (Photo: John Thomson)

floral or citric fragrances; we tasted a version Duff made with bergamot and milk. The royal court of Louis XIV at Versailles, which tightly controlled French commerce in chocolate, enjoyed spicing the drink with cloves. Later, Thomas Jefferson would sample chocolate in France and begin importing it to Monticello. A relatively plain chocolate was popular among the men frequenting British coffeehouses in the 1700’s.

Cocoa presses were invented in the early 1800’s to expel much of the fat from roasted cacao beans; the resulting cakes can then be pulverized and dried into cocoa powder. About 1830, the Van Houten family in Amsterdam perfected the process, alkalizing the cocoa powder to make it darker, more soluble, and less acidic, a treatment now known as “Dutching”. Cocoa powder was soon brought to market by Van Houten, Cadbury, and other firms as the basis for a hot drink, less rich and creamy than pure chocolate. Duff treated us to a version she made with Scharffen Berger unsweetened cocoa powder, sugar, and milk.

At our March 18 meeting, **Charles A. Baker-Clark**, a professor of hospitality and tourism management at Grand Valley State University, shared lessons from his recent book, *Profiles from the Kitchen: What Great Cooks Have Taught Us about Ourselves and Our Food*. He also shared with us three

*continued on next page*

**CHAA PROGRAMS** *continued from previous page*

kinds of bread that he had baked, symbolizing the central role of companionship (the word means literally “sharing bread”) in the education of cooks and others.

Baker-Clark explained that after he was laid off as a social worker, he started a second career by attending culinary school and by completing a doctoral program in education. The question he sought to answer is, How do great cooks acquire and pass on their knowledge of cooking and their sensibilities about food? His Ph.D. dissertation focused on James Beard, Julia Child, and Elizabeth David as case studies of learners and teachers. His book is an expanded version, benefiting from his study of such personalities as M. F. K. Fisher, the great food writer; John Thorne, the leading light behind *Simple Cooking* in Northampton, MA; Rick Bayless and his family, proponents of authentic Mexican cuisine in Chicago; Father Dominic Garramone, a Benedictine monk and bread baker in La Salle-Peru, IL; John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance in Oxford, MS; the late Georgia Gilmore of Montgomery, AL, community organizer and friend of Rosa Parks; and Mildred Council, African-American owner of Mama Dip’s Country Cooking Restaurant in Chapel Hill, NC. He found at least three themes running through the lives of these great lovers of food:

- companionship as a nexus of support, exemplified by the mutual influence of Paul and Julia Child, and by John T. Edge’s view of food as a community enterprise
- adversity as a goad to learning and growth, as seen in how the future Elizabeth David, fleeing the fascist occupation of Europe during World War 2 and living in Cairo, was able to deepen her Mediterranean sensibility there, and how Georgia Gilmore was able to organize women to use their homes to make meals and bake goods in support of the civil rights bus boycott
- simplicity as a creative force, as seen in the cooking of Beard, Thorne, and Garramone.

With the help of maps and taste-samples, **Gauri Thergaonkar**, an Indian-born retail manager at Zingerman’s Deli, presented “A Pound of Peppercorns: A History of Spices, Taxation, and Economics” at our April 15 meeting. Her talk focused on the two kinds of pepper indigenous to India: black pepper from the Malabar or “Spice” coast in the southwest, especially from present-day Kerala state; and, from the northeast coast, long pepper, which has a different and more pungent taste. It is in Vedic literature (1500-800 BCE), she noted, that long pepper is first recorded, along with mustard and turmeric, and later black pepper. White pepper is an especially ripe form of black pepper in which the dark shell of the berry, or peppercorn, is removed by grinding (or traditionally, as in the case of Wynad pepper, by repeated washing) to expose the whitish seed within. Gauri allowed us to sample both Tellicherry and Wynad pepper from Kerala, as well as whole and ground forms of long pepper.

Early on, pepper found its way both eastward to China and westward to Arabia and Europe. Soon after Macedonian king Alexander’s conquests brought him to the Indus valley (327 BCE), the Greek philosopher Theophrastus described types of pepper and other Asian spices in his *Enquiry into Plants*. This seems to reflect the birth of a spice trade to Europe over land and

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE

Enclosed with this newsletter is the annual form to renew your CHAA membership or your subscription to *Repast*.

Members of CHAA enjoy the following annual benefits:

- *Repast*— four issues of our original-content quarterly publication
- Monthly meetings featuring interesting speakers
- Two participatory theme meals.

Please complete the form and mail it with your check to:

Daniel Longone  
1207 W. Madison  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

sea. Alexandria, in Egypt, would become a major port in this trade. If monsoons were avoided, spices could be brought by ship across the Arabian Sea, between what are now Kerala and Yemen. The Biblical story of a queen voyaging from Sheba (modern-day Yemen or vicinity) to Jerusalem to meet with King Solomon suggests efforts to maintain control of the lucrative overland spice trade from Yemen northward. Later, the wealth of the Nabataean kingdom, centered at Petra (est. 312 BCE) in modern-day Jordan, was also largely based on its control of the caravan routes in spices and other commodities. Roman author Pliny (1<sup>st</sup> Century CE) commented how such trade enriched local merchants, and how wealthy Romans had to pay dearly for the luxury of black pepper from India; they used it not only in cookery but as a tonic for impotence and other ailments. The flourishing of this trade undercut the importance of long pepper in the Mediterranean, and brought the price of black pepper down to only 40 times that of wheat by weight. Still, it remained a luxury item in late Roman antiquity, and Gibbon noted that pepper was part of the ransom demanded by Visigothic king Alaric in his siege of Rome.

The rise of Islam (7<sup>th</sup> Century), especially after its capture of Alexandria, allowed a re-assertion of Arab control of this trade, and spices became more expensive in Europe. Pepper was sometimes used as a sort of currency in medieval European commerce. In the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Venetian and other Italian merchants gained European hegemony in buying Arab spices, for which the Crusades further whetted appetites. The Venetian trade was crippled when the Ottoman Turks captured the ports of Alexandria and finally Constantinople (1453). By that time, however, Europeans no longer thought of pepper as a luxury item but rather as an expensive necessity. Pepper is called for in only 9% of the recipes in *The Forme of Cury*, an English royal compilation from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. ■

# DUTCH OVENS: CLASSIC COOKING VESSELS OF THE HEARTLAND

by John G. Ragsdale

*John G. Ragsdale and his wife DeDe live in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is the author of several histories and cookbooks on the Dutch oven, including Dutch Ovens Chronicled: Their Use in the United States, first published in 1991 by the University of Arkansas Press and reprinted by Phoenix International in 2004. A retired petroleum engineer, John writes on a wide range of historical topics, and serves on the editorial staff of the South Arkansas Historical Journal. His article on mayhaw jelly appeared in that journal in Fall 2001. Besides his historical writing, John runs a timber farm in south Arkansas.*

**F**or early American cooks, Dutch ovens were standard cooking vessels on home hearths and fire sites. The true Dutch oven is a cast-metal container, with three legs on the bottom to support the oven over hot coals, and a tight-fitting rimmed lid to contain coals on the top. As are most Dutch ovens today, they were traditionally made of cast iron, which can maintain a steady heat with viable coals.

Their size, sturdy construction, and dependable heating made Dutch ovens a basic necessity that could be carried to cabins, campfires, and wagon trains. They are superb baking vessels, but are also versatile and can be used for browning, steaming, stewing, frying, and warming foods.

## Early History in America

The Dutch oven evolved from other cast-iron vessels that had been used for centuries. For many years, in northern Europe and the American Colonies, there were pots, kettles, griddles and spiders in use with and without lids. These vessels were generally used on the open hearths of homes, or over fires in sheds or other structures separate from the house.

Improvements included a close-fitting lid, eventually one that could retain coals placed on it. The ovens also became shallower in shape, allowing the cook to more easily place food in them. I imagine that some ingenious wife or housekeeper approached a local foundry supplier and asked for a wider vessel with a lid that would accommodate items of "pie-pan" size. From this came the early Dutch oven. The Dutch ovens that we know probably were first made in the Colonies in the early 1700's. With available iron ore and coal for furnace fuel, the first ovens may have been cast in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, or New Jersey. They became widely used from the mid-1700's on.<sup>1</sup>

Dutch ovens usually have two "ears", or handles, one each on opposite sides. The early ovens had vertical "7"-shaped ears; the same hooks that were used to lift pots and kettles could be inserted in these ears to lift the oven. Later, many ovens had vertical "cow's horn" ears. These had a thick base connected to the oven, and tapered up to a smaller tip that curved to touch the oven and make a closed loop. Either pot hooks or a wire bail could fit in the "cow's horn" ears. Later ears were horizontal and were generally even with the top of the oven; most ovens today



**Photograph of a Dutch oven "owned by Mrs. Ott, of Petersburg, Illinois", from *McClure's Magazine*, VI:2 (January 1896), p. 118. The photo was one of those taken to accompany Ida Tarbell's article "Abraham Lincoln" in that issue of the magazine. Note the wire bail attached to two "ears" on the side of the pot, which have the cow's-horn shape still prevalent at the time.**

have this type of ears. Sometime in the late 1800's manufacturers attached a wire bail to the two ears large enough to fold over the edge of the oven. This bail supplies a permanent way to move the oven.

The Dutch oven was often called a "bake kettle" or "bake oven". The origin of the name "Dutch oven" itself is uncertain. Various theories refer to the English adoption of Dutch casting techniques in the years immediately following 1700; the presence of early Dutch settlers and traders in the Colonies; and possible practices of the Deutsch settlers in Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

Written records support the widespread use of Dutch ovens along the eastern seaboard in the earliest years of the Republic. For example, in a report on prisoner-of-war camps in 1780, Dutch ovens were included in the equipment requested for a camp near Winchester, Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Also in Virginia, Mary Washington, the mother of General George Washington, in her 1788 will, was so concerned for her cast-iron vessels that she provided that one-half of her "iron kitchen furniture" would go to a grandson and the other one-half would go to a granddaughter. The Lewis and Clark expedition, which traveled west in 1804 to examine the people and resources in the vast Louisiana Purchase, took food and equipment with them that included some Dutch ovens.<sup>4</sup>

Some reports of early use recommended that cabbage leaves or other green leaves be placed on the bottom of the oven to keep foods from sticking or scorching, with the foods placed either directly on the leaves or in another pan. In my own cooking experience, I have found that this is unnecessary. I simply oil the bottom of the oven with cooking oil, and food

*continued on next page*

**DUTCH OVENS** *continued from previous page*  
usually doesn't stick, provided there is not excessive heat below.

From a Quaker woman's cookbook in Maryland in 1851, I have read of people placing their bread dough, after kneading, in a greased Dutch oven near the fire to allow the dough to rise. Later, the oven was placed over coals, with other coals on top, to bake the loaf.<sup>5</sup>

Some early ovens, perhaps because of their large size or simply out of choice, had four legs. However, these are unusual, as three legs gives more universal and stable support. Miss Eliza Leslie, in her *New Cookery Book* published in Philadelphia in 1857, mentioned Dutch ovens that had three or four legs.<sup>6</sup> I once owned a four-legged oval-shaped oven made by the W. P. Cresson Company of Philadelphia about 1850. The oval shape would have made it suitable for baking a goose, a turkey, or other large meat portions.<sup>7</sup>

During the Civil War, soldiers sought Dutch ovens to allow them to bake beans and their cornbread or corn pones.<sup>8</sup> Some home owners might have been fortunate if they had only their oven confiscated. But then the home owner was unfortunate in losing the prime cooking vessel; what a disaster.

Many reports from the Appalachian section of the country tell of Dutch-oven cooking on the home hearth. The foods were meats, soups, stews, cakes, potatoes, and baked breads and biscuits. A report in western North Carolina from about 1880 told of guests staying in a cabin. The host stirred the corn meal for a dodger which was baked in a "round skillet with cover".<sup>9</sup>

#### Steaming-Hot Breads in the Midwest

In the middle area of the country, I have found an abundance of references to Dutch-oven cooking from the 1830's onward. Most commonly, these ovens were used to make bread, biscuits, and other baked goods from dough.

In 1834 William Nowlin, son of John and Melinda Nowlin, reported on their movement to a bark-covered house near Dearborn, Michigan. His pioneer report was of their life there near the Ecorse River. He reports of his mother cooking with a fire in the fireplace. She had a bake kettle, or Dutch oven, in which she placed her bread with coals underneath and on the rimmed lid of the bake kettle. The family eagerly awaited the steaming bread for their meal.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, Lora Case fondly recalled his mother baking rye and Indian bread in the bake kettle of their log cabin, around 1840 in Hudson, Ohio, near Cleveland.<sup>11</sup> I read an Indiana report from about the same time, in which the cook provided red-hot corn pones or corn-balls for the guests.<sup>12</sup> Consider this use of your Dutch oven for your next party!

An article in *Harper's* magazine in 1862 gave a report of a trip in Missouri when biscuits were cooked in the "three-legged iron convenience" or Dutch oven.<sup>13</sup> From an 1879 report of an adventurous voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, one of the river workers was known for his cooking. He baked his bread in a "flat-bottomed, three-legged, iron-covered" vessel.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout my home state of Arkansas, the Dutch oven also was an early fixture of home cooking. Samuel H. Chester recorded many events in the lives of settlers developing the rolling, wooded hills in the far southern part of the state. His 1845 report from near Mt. Holly recounts a fond recollection of wonderful food from the "bread ovens, heated top and bottom with coals from the wood fire".<sup>15</sup> Mt. Holly is about 15 miles west of El Dorado, where my wife and I lived for many years.

In a description of cooking in a log cabin in the Ouachita Mountains near Mena, in far western Arkansas in the 1850's, Marion E. Watkins described the baking of pone bread in a covered iron skillet. She wrote that after the corn pone was prepared, it was cooked in the skillet set over a bed of coals, with more coals placed on the lid so both top and bottom would bake.<sup>16</sup> A report from Cora Pinkley-Call of Carroll County, Arkansas in 1879 spoke of cooking in the Ozark Mountains region. Her comment related to cookie dough sweetened with sorghum syrup. These were Christmas cookies baked in a Dutch oven heated with coals from the fire in the hearth. The space in the oven would not be as large as our current cookie sheets, but you could cook repeated batches of cookies.<sup>17</sup>

Patrick Dunnahoo provides great detail on the cooking reputations of some of the pioneer Arkansas women in the late 1800's. Among the details he relates from this period are the baking of biscuits and cornbreads in a Dutch oven, or "skillet and lid", in the Ouachita Mountains<sup>18</sup> and in the Delta country of the eastern part of the state<sup>19</sup>.

#### Westward Migration

As pioneer families moved out west, many brought their basic household goods with them, including their Dutch ovens. This allowed them to bake cornbreads, biscuits, or loaf breads each day, both *en route* as well as after they settled in their new locales.<sup>20</sup>

The eventual appearance of Dutch ovens in mail-order catalogs was an additional factor promoting the migration of this type of cookery. For instance, the Montgomery Ward catalog of 1895 included illustrations of cast-iron Dutch ovens in 10-, 11-, 12-, and 14-inch diameter sizes.<sup>21</sup>

A magazine article from 1880 described the use of a Dutch oven in the daily dinner preparations for a team of government surveyors traveling through the Rocky Mountains with pack mules:

But all this happens while the cook gets his fire well a-going. That accomplished, and two square bars of three-quarters inch iron laid across the trench, affording a firm resting-place for the kettles, the stove is complete. He sets a pail of water on to heat, jams his bake-oven well into the coals on one side, buries the cover of it in the other side of the fire, and gets out his long knife. Going to the cargo, he takes a side of bacon out of its gunny-bag, and cuts as many slices as he needs, saving the rind to grease his oven. Then he is ready to make his bread.

*continued on page 17*

# GEBHARDT AND LA CHOY

⌘

## MAKING ETHNIC FOOD SAFE FOR MIDDLE AMERICA

by Hanna Raskin

*Hanna Raskin is an independent food historian in Asheville, NC, where she lives with her husband Kenneth Raskin (they wed last August) and also coordinates culinary tours (for information about her upcoming Sept. 13-15 tour of Memphis, “Pigging Out and About”, visit [www.tabletours.org](http://www.tabletours.org)). Hanna is an Ann Arbor native who went on to earn degrees at Oberlin College and the State University of New York. She has researched and written about such topics as the history of American pizza, and the embrace of Chinese food by American Jews. She gets back to Ann Arbor periodically for visits with her parents, Emily and Jerry Miller, and hopes to speak to CHAA in the future.*

If “favorite food” surveys and consumption data can be trusted, some of the most American of dishes are not what most Americans would call American at all. Chinese, Mexican, and Italian foods are at the core of our national diet. Americans, of course, play fast and loose with those terms. As anyone knows who’s made the mistake of trying to find, in Mexico, a plate of tortilla chips slathered in incandescent-orange cheese, many of the ethnic foods Americans devour are barely on speaking terms with their purported inspirations back home.

The jazzy reinterpretations of traditional folk foods Americans have come to love were designed not as odes to authenticity, but, rather, to appeal to Americans set on expressing themselves at the dinner table. Unlike the staid foods inherited from the Old Country, the salty chop sueys, chile con carnes and pizzas pitched by a generation of culinary visionaries promised the fun, freedom and excitement Americans valued—at a very reasonable price.

But even those inherent qualities alone weren’t enough to propel previously exotic dishes into the mainstream. The first ethnic food entrepreneurs relied heavily on marketing campaigns to persuade a skeptical eating public that their products were clean and healthful. Two of the earliest such campaigns, conducted by La Choy and Gebhardt’s Eagle Chili Powder, are represented by a series of recipe booklets housed in the collection of the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archives at the University of Michigan’s Clements Library.

The booklets, published over an almost 30-year span starting in the 1920’s, illustrate both companies’ successful attempts to render ethnic food accessible. Judging from the text of the earliest booklets, contemporary cooks worried Chinese and Mexican foods would be hard to make and even harder to defend at a table surrounded by picky eaters. Booklet writers gently reassured readers their fears were unfounded, touting their product as “desired relief from the endless rounds of fried meat and plain vegetables”, in the words of a 1931 La Choy publication.



Cover of a Gebhardt recipe booklet, undated, c. 1950's.

All graphics accompanying this article courtesy of Longone Center for American Culinary Research (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan), scanned by library docent and CHAA member John Thomson.

The strategy worked. While the first booklets issued by both companies downplay any hint of exoticism in deference to their still-skittish customers, mid-century editions of the booklets are awash in ethnic symbolism. Housewives, by then confident of the American-ness of the recipes contained within, presumably looked at the once-threatening images of Chinese lettering and Mexican maracas and sighed: “How cute.”

### Mexico in a Bottle

William Gebhardt wasn’t aiming for such whimsy when he first concocted his eponymous chili powder. In the early 1890’s, the German immigrant managed a concession attached to his buddy’s saloon in the tiny village of New Braunfels, a Teutonic outpost that has since been nearly swallowed up by neighboring San Antonio. Gebhardt himself had been reared on a diet of paprikash, but he discovered Texans liked things hot. He pounded oregano, chili pepper and cumin seeds into the spice blend that became the basis for his popular chili con carne. To obtain chilies, Gebhardt had to place an order with farmers in far-off San Luis Potosi, a Mexican town more than 500 miles to the south. His orders were always large: because of the short harvest season, buyers had to stock up on a full year’s supply and then figure out how to store thousands of pods.

Despite some stiff competition from the flute-blowing Kokopelli figure, dried chilies have become *the* symbol of the

*continued on next page*

## ETHNIC FOOD *continued from previous page*

American Southwest. Gift shops load their rafters with ristas of them, and relocated Northerners ceremoniously hang them on their porches. Their charm would have been lost on Gebhardt, who must have hated those fat bouquets of ancho chilies, which he had to guard from rot and carefully mete out so as not to deplete his inventory before the next picking season. So he did exactly what every worker wishes he could do to the job-related item he most despises: he pulverized it. He ground together his spice mix in a food mill and bottled it in tiny medicine-type bottles, sealing the flavor of Mexican-American cookery. Three years after he loaded his wares into a salesman's wagon, he received the first chili powder patent. (In 1911 Gebhardt would sell his company to his brothers-in-law, who introduced a range of other products, including the first canned tamales and canned chili con carne.)

Gebhardt sagely promoted his chili powder and other products as the solution to taste bud fatigue. According to early recipe booklets, a sprinkle of the spice blend could transform any dish into a virtual trip to Old Mexico. "Added flavor and zest with practically no added expense!" trumpeted the cover of *Salads, Alluring and New* (1926), a bold Gebhardt publication that didn't shrink from combining chili powder and gelatin.

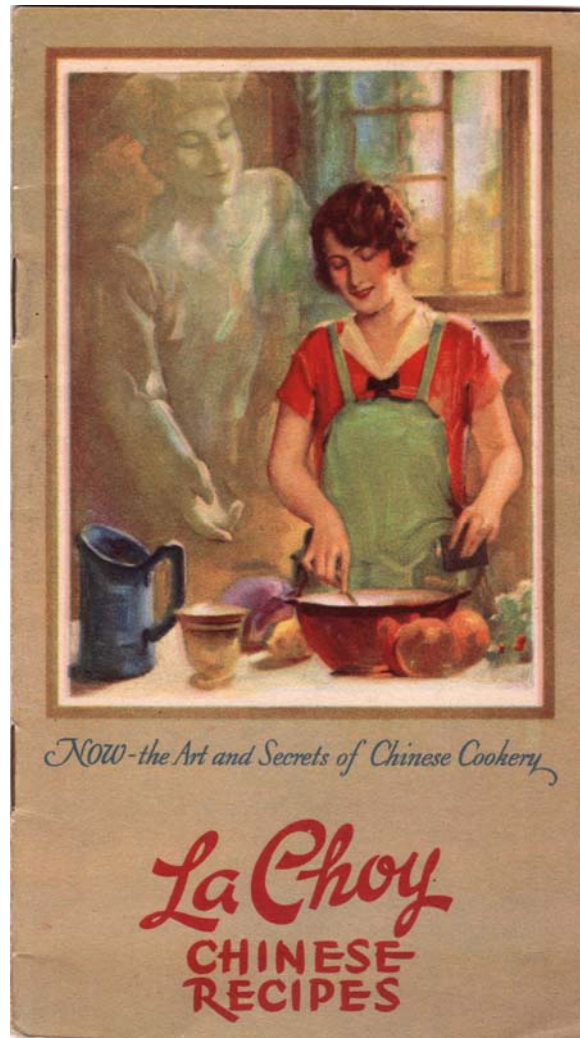
Some of the recipes featured in *Salads* would appear in later booklets. Also important was an earlier company pamphlet, *Gebhardt's Mexican Cooking: The Flavor of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century—That Real Mexican Tang* (c. 1908), recently reprinted by Applewood Books (see "Morsels and Tidbits", *Repast* Winter 2005). But what would emerge as the company's signature promotional booklet was *Mexican Cookery for American Homes*, first published in 1923 and revised at least three times over the succeeding decades. The introduction to the first edition was typically bombastic:

It was not until the Gebhardt Chile Powder Company succeeded in preparing these spices and blending them into the perfection found only in Gebhardt's Eagle Chile Powder that Mexican dishes really became practical. Since then, the growing popularity in the U.S. of Mexican cookery has been remarkable and today chile con carne, tamales and huevos con chile are as common in many American homes as our traditional beefsteak.

But the booklet also subtly acknowledged readers' concerns about cleanliness, trumpeting the "big, sun-lit, white-tiled Gebhardt kitchens".

In addition to recipes, the booklet proposed sample menus that injected Gebhardt products ingeniously into otherwise mainstream meals. Menus included "A Good Luncheon New to Many", featuring cream of pea soup, a Spanish omelet, and rice muffins, and "Wherever You Live, You Will Enjoy This Typical Mexican Dinner", a feast of broiled steak, rice, baked onions, tortillas, and Mexican salad.

Recipes for Spanish omelets and Mexican salads were retained throughout the run of *Mexican Cookery*, but their presentation had changed dramatically by 1936. That year's booklet pinned Spanish headings on the menus and recipes, a significant departure from 1923, when only English had been used. "Rice muffins" were forever replaced by "arroz y frijoles".



Cover of the 1929 edition of the pamphlet, *The Art and Secrets of Chinese Cooking*, from La Choy Food Products, Detroit, MI.

The 1936 edition also introduced Mexican-themed graphics. While the 1923 booklet was fronted by a line-drawing of a white family eating on their estate with the specter of a Mexican on his mule-drawn cart lurking so far in the background as to occupy only the diners' imaginations (shown on the front cover of this issue of *Repast*), the cover of the 1936 booklet is a full-color patch of a Mexican tapestry. While authenticity still wasn't among the booklets' aims—a 1949 edition fronted by a plate of tamales included a recipe for "Ensalada Estilo Sombrero", a collage of little hats made of cottage cheese perched on pineapple rings, encircled by bands of green peppers—the integration of Spanish language and Mexican images speaks to the nation's growing comfort with ethnic foods.

### Chinese Fare for the Cocktail Party

La Choy's flagship publication *The Art and Secrets of Chinese Cookery*, which reached more than 8 million cooks in the 1930's, followed a trajectory much like that of Gebhardt's. La Choy's founders, University of Michigan alums Wally Smith and Ilhan New, got into business in Detroit in 1922 with a single product—canned bean sprouts—and soon expanded their product line to include boxed dinners, supplementary vegetables such as water chestnuts and bamboo shoots, and seasonings such as Soy Sauce and the powdered "Flavor Secret".

Smith, a grocer, had an instinctive grip on the market, and New provided the pair's technical know-how. Smith first called

*continued on page 18*



# A TANTALIZING DISPLAY

3

# THE MICHIGAN FOODWAYS EXHIBIT

text and photo by CHAA member Sherry Sundling

An overcast sky and intermittent showers were not sufficient to stop the more than 1,000 visitors who came on May 26 to help celebrate an eagerly awaited Triple Crown Event hosted by Chelsea’s McKune Library: (1) The opening of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit “Key Ingredients: America by Food”; (2) The opening of the “Michigan Foodways” exhibit sponsored by the Michigan Humanities Council; and (3) an outdoor Market Faire, which featured Michigan food products, chef demonstrations, music, crafts and historical culinary reenactments. Smiling faces abounded. The rain may have dampened our shoes, but not our spirits.

I had volunteered my experience in the culinary world to serve as a docent, leading groups of people through the exhibits. In the process of exploring with them our myriad cultural and historical connections to food, I felt that I was as much enlightened and enriched by the experience as those I guided.

The first thing one sees upon climbing the library stairs leading to the Smithsonian’s exhibit is a display with the words “Key Ingredients: America by Food” emblazoned across the top. How perfect, I said to myself: those first two words provide the answer to a question I had often pondered, “Do we HAVE a national food tradition in America as they do, say, in Italy or China or Mexico?” I asked the sixth-graders I was leading, “If you were stranded on a desert island with an individual from each of those three countries, could you come up with the names of several dishes representing them?” They easily did so. I then inquired of them, “If the three individuals were asked what dishes they could name that were purely American, what do you think they might say outside of Hot Dogs, Coca Cola, and McDonald’s hamburgers?” Their faces looked puzzled, then went blank as they shook their heads.

Why is this so? Perhaps because we are still a young country and have not had centuries to integrate all our immigrant influences, “American Cuisine”, I think, tends to be more regional than national. Even more to the point, we have *key ingredients*: ingredients found in the Americas but nowhere else before Columbus and fellow explorers took them back to Europe and Asia. These ingredients— such as squash, corn, beans, cranberries, maple syrup, popcorn, Concord grapes, wild rice, tomatoes— revolutionized the diet of much of the world, and sustained the early colonists in their struggle to survive. They were used by successive waves of immigrants out of necessity, to substitute for the familiar but no longer available Old World ingredients in making their traditional dishes— thus inventing new dishes. Always evolving, changing, adapting, little by little they added to and changed our diets, and our thoughts of what is American food. Even to this day.



A panel of the Michigan Foodways exhibit

The Smithsonian exhibit, curated by Charles Camp, includes five sections: Land of Plenty (on food production); Home Cooking; Local Flavor (regional food identity); Festival of Feasts (restaurants and other public eating); and Dynamic Delivery (marketing and technology).

I found particularly interesting the second exhibit, “Michigan Foodways”, which was developed by the Michigan State University Museum and the Michigan Humanities Council in Lansing. The lead scholar for this exhibit was CHAA’s own Yvonne Lockwood, who is Curator of Folklife at the museum. Very well researched and designed, Michigan Foodways examines the many food traditions of our state, while presenting the story of its food by discussing Michigan’s rich agriculture, its many ethnic cuisines, food traditions, special culinary celebrations and ceremonies, cookbooks, and manufactured food products.

The exhibit mentions the first cookbook published in Michigan in 1847, as well as several community and charity cookbooks, which were first published during the Civil War to benefit the families of soldiers fallen. Most intriguing to me was the book written in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Dr. A. W. Chase, who lived in Ann Arbor. It contained not only recipes, but myriad

*continued on next page*

**MICHIGAN***continued from previous page*

items of household information: how to repair or replace wagon wheels, how to make soap and candles, how to set broken bones, treat snake bites, or make medicine from wild plants to treat the sick— people as well as livestock. In short, all the knowledge that would prove invaluable to the pioneers who bought this book to take with them on their arduous overland journey to the West. Aside from the family Bible, it was often the only book carried in the cramped confines of their wagons.

How do we get the food we eat? We learn from the exhibit that there are three different methods of supplying food: hunting, fishing, and gathering; planting and harvesting; and raising domesticated animals. With its large forests, extensive fields, and the largest freshwater lakes in the world, Michigan is ideally situated to reap a variety of foods in all three categories. Wild game and fishing opportunities abound, providing hunters and fishermen with venison, bear, game birds, salmon, whitefish, pike, and more. A special treat if one visits the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) is the delicious home-smoked fish, as well as beef jerky and turkey jerky, found in the many family roadside stores. Morel mushrooms, berries of all kinds, maple syrup, and wild rice are gathered in various areas throughout the state.

The exhibit shows that with its diverse geography, temperate climate, and varied soils, Michigan is one of the most significant agricultural states in the U.S. We lead the world in the production of tart cherries. Our state ranks first in the country for blueberries, dry beans, and new potatoes; second for celery; third for apples, asparagus, and rhubarb; and fourth for plums, grapes, sugar beets, peaches, and sweet cherries. And, of course there is also the production of maple syrup, butter, milk, mint, onions, and wine. As for raising domesticated livestock, beef, sheep, swine, goats, and poultry are raised throughout Michigan in large numbers.

The display of all the food products created and manufactured in Michigan was of great interest to all of us. Looking at the various products on display brought excited comments, as familiar packages and pictures brought to mind foods we may have long taken for granted. Kellogg's and Post Cereals, Vernor's Ginger Ale, Gerber's baby foods, Mackinac Island Fudge, American Spoon Foods, and Pioneer and Big Chief beet sugar were pointed out— and then a childish squeal, "Look! There's Jiffy Mix! That's made here in Chelsea!" brought smiles to us all.

The expression "You are what you eat", aside from a health standpoint, also tends to reflect one's traditions and ethnic roots. Michigan's unique ethnic groups and heritage dictate that the foods we eat are often different from what is customarily eaten in other American states. We are all unique in some way. Louisiana has its Gumbos and Jambalayas; San Francisco has Cioppino and Sourdough Bread; and of course there is Maine Lobster, Boston Baked Beans, Texas Barbecue, and Southern Fried Chicken with grits. The list goes on and on. But Michigan, you say? What do we have? More than one might think. Influenced heavily by the large and varied immigrant populations who chose to make Michigan their home, all of whom brought with them their own traditions, cuisines, and culture, Michigan has developed its own culinary history. With

over 100 different ethnic groups who have settled here, how could we not?

At the beginning of the Michigan Foodways exhibit is an intriguing Culinary Map of Michigan identifying the areas where Michigan specialties are to be found. Who has not heard of Cornish Pasties from the U.P., Paczki from Hamtramck, or Cherry Pies from Traverse City? But, what is this next one— Cudighi in Ishpeming? Muskrat in Monroe? Trenary Toast in the U.P.? Coney Islands and Butter Tarts found throughout southeastern Mich.? Fried Fish Sandwiches in a Bun in Bayport? Yes, these and more are to be found in Michigan and for the most part, only in Michigan. Interesting histories of all of them provided insights and often humorous moments as we wandered through the exhibit.

Cudighi (kud e gee) sandwiches were created in 1936 by a restaurant owner in Ishpeming, MI. Comprised of a spiced ground pork patty served on an Italian bun with melted mozzarella, onions, and mustard, it is often referred to as an Italian Sandwich, but does not exist in Italy. The Coney Island, a type of chili dog, was created by Macedonian immigrants beginning around 1914 in Jackson, Flint, and Detroit. It is an immigrant creation based on Greek seasonings, but is not to be found anywhere in Greece. Trenary Toast (my favorite!) is a type of cinnamon toast introduced by Finnish immigrants.

The muskrat display seems to attract the most attention. It features a stuffed muskrat with its scaly tail, and an odd-appearing Electric Ojibway Muskrat Spear. The muskrat-eating tradition in the marshy lands around Monroe, south of Detroit on Lake Erie, is a holdover from the original French settlers in that region. In 1987, a major controversy erupted when the Michigan Department of Agriculture, concerned about the non-inspected status of muskrat meat, moved to prohibit its sale. In the face of popular protest, state authorities had to back down, and eventually a compromise was worked out. (For more information on the muskrat tradition and controversies, see *Repast* Winter 2004 and Spring 2007.)

In addition to the culinary contributions of French, Greek, Italian, and Scandinavian immigrants to Michigan, the exhibit also describes those of Native Americans as well as German, Dutch, Belgian, Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Bosnian, Arab, Mexican, and Puerto Rican immigrants.

Chelsea is the first of six Michigan towns hosting the Key Ingredients / Michigan Foodways twin exhibits. The schedule is:

May 26-Jul. 8	Chelsea
Jul. 13-Aug. 26	Calumet
Aug. 31-Oct. 14	Cheboygan
Oct. 19-Dec. 2	Whitehall
Dec. 7-Jan 27, 2008	Frankenmuth
Feb. 1-Mar. 16, 2008	Dundee.

For complete information regarding the exhibits, and for contest-winning recipes from each town, visit the website [www.michiganfoodways.org](http://www.michiganfoodways.org). Corresponding exhibits are touring every region of the country; see [www.keyingredients.org](http://www.keyingredients.org). I highly recommend everyone to visit when it comes to a town near you. It is a Once In A Lifetime opportunity— and a highly memorable, enjoyable experience. ■

# 2<sup>ND</sup> LONGONE SYMPOSIUM: CUISINES ON PARADE

by CHAA members Laura Gillis and Randy Schwartz

It was a national pageant, of sorts, when the Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History was held in Ann Arbor this past May 18-20. A selection of the vibrant, varied ethnic and regional cuisines of America was on display and under a microscope, as 200 eager students and scholars of food history gathered for the conference.

The symposium was organized by the Janice Bluestein Longone Center for American Culinary Research, part of the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. It included illustrated presentations at the UM's Rackham Amphitheater; a Clements exhibit of 125 books and other items, called "A to Z: An Alphabet of Regional and Ethnic American Culinary Traditions"; a field trip to Zingerman's Creamery, Bakehouse, and Roadhouse; and some grand American repasts.

Jan Longone, inaugural curator at the Center, has recalled that in the early 1980's, when she gave a lecture in England at the first or second Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, she was asked a question about American foods. At the end of the question the person added a comment to the effect that, "But you Americans don't really have a national food tradition, do you." She was silently insulted. To her it was obvious that we have a national food tradition. To him, obviously it was not. Yet, how best to go about changing this not uncommon but ill-informed perception? It so bothered her that she resolved as a life goal to continue her efforts in accruing knowledge of our unique American culinary heritage and making it available to the world.

The fruits of this effort have ripened wonderfully, as the Center and its biennial symposia are becoming premier resources for the study of culinary Americana. The core of its collection consists of treatises, cookbooks, menus, food-industry ephemera, and other materials— well over 20,000 items in all— collected over a 40-year period by CHAA founders Jan and Dan Longone, augmented by the rich holdings of books, historic manuscripts, maps, and other materials assembled at the Clements over decades.

Among the treasures on display at the "A to Z" exhibit, filed under X for "eXtra-special", was a book that was written to answer the question: "Have you no national dishes?" This question was asked of the members of the women's committee of the international exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate America's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The book that the women compiled, *The National Cookery Book*, showed that America had and has a national cuisine. As Jan has recounted, among the recipes included in the volume were Idaho Miner's Bread, Oysters to Roast Along the Shore in Maryland, Rhode Island Slump, Florida Guava Preserves, Succotash, Sassafras Beer, New Orleans Gumbo, South Carolina Rice, Johnny Cakes, Maple Sugar Sauce, Canvas-back Duck, Delaware Terrapin, and a Kansas Poor Man's Pudding in Grasshopper Times (during locust invasions). Jan points out that the answer to the question, then, is a resounding "YES!"

The current symposium was itself the launching pad for

some important publications. The 40-page symposium booklet included biographies and abstracts of the presenters, color photos of selected items from the "A to Z" exhibit, menus of the symposium meals, and other materials. Food writer Molly O'Neill was on hand to autograph complimentary copies of a brand new anthology she has edited, *American Food Writing* (see p. 19 of this issue for more details). Those attending the symposium's American Banquet, held at the Michigan League Ballroom on Saturday night, received copies of a new facsimile edition of Malinda Russell's historic *A Domestic Cook Book* (Paw Paw, MI, 1866), just published by the Clements (see p. 16 of this issue for more details). The banquet itself featured a musicale performed by the Raisin Pickers, a three-person string band from Manchester, MI; a sampling of historic American relishes and preserves; and such main dishes as chicken strudel with wild Michigan morel sauce.

Below, we have provided summaries of the main presentations at the symposium. (A scheduled presentation by Jane and Michael Stern on Northeastern regional foods unfortunately was cancelled.)

## The Northeast

Among ethnic contributions to American cookery, the Dutch influence was established early, but has had a lasting, if often overlooked, impact. Every day we might eat foods and dishes that can be traced to those eaten in the New Netherland settlements, such as cookies, doughnuts, dark breads, cheeses, pancakes, waffles, gingerbread, coleslaw, beer, and brandy. In her talk on "The Dutch Influence on the American Kitchen", food historian **Peter G. Rose**, who was born in the Netherlands, described how such foods became implanted in the New World.

New Netherland was a colony of the Dutch West India Company that extended from the Connecticut to the Delaware rivers. The colony was established following Henry Hudson's explorations of the river now bearing his name, beginning in 1609. In 1674, the province came into British hands, where it remained until the American Revolution. The Dutch period saw the introduction of vegetables, herbs, fruit trees, and farm animals from the Old Country, along with traditional food practices. The settlers were also impressed and delighted by the bounty available in the new land, and their trade with Native Americans was an important additional resource.

Account books and orphanage menus are perhaps the most important sources for learning about the diet of Dutch farm families and other commoners, Rose noted. Breakfast might include bread and butter, cheese, ham or other meat, greens thickened with bread, porridge, tea, and beer. The porridge was made from milk and either bread or flour. Beer was taken at virtually every meal because it was safer to drink than water, and coffee was not popular until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The hearty main meal of the day, eaten about 10 a.m., featured a one-pot dish of meat and vegetables, a fish or meat dish, bread, and fruit or a sweet, such as cake or cookies. Pancakes might be served at this main meal, but not at breakfast. The evening meal consisted of bread, leftovers from the main meal, and perhaps porridge.

*continued on next page*

## SYMPOSIUM *continued from previous page*

The manners and eating habits of more middle-class families are captured in Dutch cookbooks from America, of which Rose has identified nearly 40 from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The evidence from cookbooks should be combined with other sources, such as written records, archaeology, and drawings; Rose presented a series of slides of relevant artworks, mostly from the Low Countries in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. *De Verstandige Kock* (The Sensible Cook) was the first Dutch cookbook published in America and the most prominent cookbook of 17<sup>th</sup>-Century America; Rose has published a translation and commentary of a 1683 edition. This work codified a full spectrum of existing recipes for baked goods, meat, fish, and salads. Milk and butter, vegetables such as carrots, turnips, and cabbage, and apples and other fruits were among the most important ingredients called for. One-pot dishes of meat and vegetables were characteristically cooked in three-legged pots set in the coals. An unusual recipe for swan pie combines cooking with taxidermy. Salads were typically dressed with melted butter or vinegar, as in coleslaw. Food preservation was represented, as it was part of the affluent kitchen.

The Dutch were clearly fond of breads; it was the mainstay of their diet. Bread was baked either at home or in a community oven for which the baker was paid a fee. The Dutch introduced baking soda in the preparation of baked goods and made a variety of sweet and spiced breads with then-exotic ingredients, such as lemon, mace, nutmeg, and pepper. Other baked and fried goods included waffles, “hard waffles” (wafers), pancakes, pretzels (sweet, not salty), cakes, cookies, and the ancestor of the doughnut. In order to recreate these dishes, waffle irons and other familiar cooking tools were brought over on trading ships. The Dutch were the first in America to make a bountiful variety of breads, and they introduced wheaten breads to Native Americans, who reportedly loved them. Whether creating everyday baked goods or special cakes and breads for holidays and celebrations, the Dutch influence is felt in modern American home kitchens and restaurants.

In his talk on “The Amish as a Symbol of Regional and Ethnic Identity”, **William Woys Weaver** distinguished what is authentic versus what is misconceived concerning the culture and foodways of the Pennsylvania Dutch, another distinctive North American ethnic group. A common misconception, he explained, is that they are of Dutch origin; in fact, they descended mostly from German, or *Deutsch*, people, although there was immense diversity within this. After their initial settlement in the Pennsylvania colony, their German language evolved into a local dialect known as Pennsylvanisch, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century many of their descendants migrated westward, especially into what are now Ontario and Ohio. A second major misconception is to conflate the Pennsylvania Dutch with religious sects that exist among them, notably the Amish and the Mennonite, but this conflation is partly the result of conscious efforts as mentioned below.

Authentic Pennsylvania Dutch cookery and culture is most similar to that of the German/French region of Alsace. The foodways, which are characterized by home cooking based on one-pot and poverty dishes served with bread, do not translate well to restaurant or other large-scale reproduction. A traditional family meal would be served on a linen-draped table in the stove

room, and the men and boys ate first. Typical dishes include *schnitz un gnepp*, a stew of smoked ham, dried apple slices, and “button” dumplings; *riwelsoup*, or dumpling soup; liver and waffles; *panhaas* or scrapple, a kind of pork-liver pudding that solidifies as it cools (thus akin to French *terrine*) and then is sliced and fried; and Centennial (or “shoo-fly”) pie, a molasses pie.

Mainstream attitudes, ranging from hostility to preciousness, have shaped perceptions of Pennsylvania Dutch food. The German language was actually banned in Pennsylvania in 1833. But the culture enjoyed a revival in the 1860’s, as writer Phebe Earle Gibbons popularized the term “Pennsylvania Dutch” to highlight this group’s distinctiveness. The first nationally prominent cookbook was Sarah Keller’s *The Pennsylvania German Cookbook* (1904). In the 1920’s, travel journalists helped inspire a quaint and fanciful imagery directed at middle-class motorists, from elaborately colored “hex signs” on barns to such culinary items as “Lebanon bologna” and the “whoopie pie”, and the myth of “seven sweets and seven soups”, the latter of which is traceable to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (1925).

A focus on the Amish and their pacifist religious sentiments became a convenient way for all German descendants to underline their patriotic American loyalties as Nazism arose in Germany. That was the backdrop for the publication of J. George Frederick’s *The Pennsylvania Dutch and Their Cookery* (New York, 1935), the first such book marketed on a nationwide basis. Weaver noted that, in fact, Amish numbers have declined from 40% to only 5% of the Pennsylvania Dutch, and while there are distinctively Amish foodways (characterized by plainness and lack of culinary flourish or ornamentation), there is no Amish cuisine per se. After World War 2, such distortions accelerated with the rise of mass-appeal Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants. Here, blue-collar tourists partake of a caricatured “authenticity”, conveyed not so much by the food itself as by its copious quantities and by atmospheric touches such as communal tables. Traditional dishes are “dumbed down”; for example, liver and waffles is replaced by chicken and waffles, which has more appeal to timid eaters or to those who abstain from pork.

### The South

“The Jemima Code: A Cook’s View into the Heart, Soul, and Recipe Box of a Wise Servant” was presented by **Toni Tipton-Martin**. “The Jemima Code” is her term for a 200-year-old stereotype of the African-American female cook, whose skill and intelligence, not to mention beauty, have been cruelly devalued.

The plantation kitchen was the locus of much of the inventiveness of Southern cookery. Especially prior to the publication of cookbooks, the traditions and innovations were handed down largely orally. Many recipes of early American cookbooks were appropriated by white women from their African-American slaves or indentured servants, who were the repositories of this knowledge. Sometimes the theft was carried out through blatant plagiarism, other times by hybridization: e.g., substituting key lime for lemon as an ingredient. This white appropriation, and unintentional affirmation, of African-American cooking is exemplified by Minnie C. Fox’s *The Blue Grass Cook Book* (1904), recently reprinted with Tipton-Martin’s introduction (Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2005).

The cookbooks that came to be written by African-American

## Praise from Participants

*What follows are excerpts from some of the many written comments that were sent to organizers following the conclusion of the Longone Symposium.*

I could never have imagined that the Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History might be as wonderful as the first, but it was—an amazing gathering of academics, writers, collectors, and culinary enthusiasts—all there to celebrate and learn. What could be better? PLUS, you made it all so delightful with everything in place, perfect organization, incredible volunteers, a FANTASTIC EXHIBIT, delicious breaks, an elegant banquet, a gorgeous facsimile of the Russell cook book, and the yummy brunch and fascinating tour of Zingerman's bakery and creamery. I came away inspired, overwhelmed and excited about the state of American culinary and foodways scholarship. You are the visionary behind this, and I am grateful for all you do for individual scholars and for the field at large.

— an attendee from Chapel Hill, NC

...I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my second visit to the University of Michigan. My first visit to Ann Arbor was in 2005 on the occasion of the first symposium... That symposium was so wonderful, and I was so enchanted by the University campus that I resolved to attend again, though I thought the Longone Center would never be able to match that opening conference for sheer delight, scholarship, and elegance. I was equally pleased and impressed by the second conference. The planning, the beautiful facilities, the quality of the presentations, the fabulous exhibit, the generous and interesting food, the warmth of the Clements Library staff, and the very clear institutional support behind this whole production are truly commendable. [...I was thrilled] to bring back to my collection here the beautiful and extremely important facsimile of Malinda Russell's *A Domestic Cook Book*... I have long wanted to examine this significant work, which...is not available elsewhere, and I had planned to ask Jan during the conference if she would permit me to examine it. I did ask her during the opening reception at the Clements, and I was completely overwhelmed when she showed me the facsimile and let me in on her big surprise which she planned to announce the following evening. This is a tremendous service to scholars everywhere. The addition of the introductory essay and the index further enhance the value of this facsimile, and I consider it one of our top acquisitions of the year. We plan to announce its availability widely, and I know that many people will be anxious to see it.

— an attendee from Cambridge, MA

You did it again—I know you had help, but surely you know it takes leadership and vision to inspire so much volunteerism. The banquet Saturday was so good... some of the best conference/symposium food I've had in a while. I loved having so much time for conversation with friends and fellow laborers.

— an attendee from Isleboro, ME

women themselves, however, reflect their own competence, ingenuity, and entrepreneurialism—especially their skills in managing scarce resources, refining Southern cooking, and entering the culinary mainstream. For example, Tipton-Martin stated, in *A Domestic Cook Book* (Paw Paw, MI, 1866) Malinda Russell, born a free woman in Tennessee, succeeded in distinguishing and codifying a whole set of Southern cooking practices, much as Amelia Simmons had done for Northeastern cookery 70 years earlier. Abby Fisher, an ex-slave from South Carolina, secretly preserved aspects of African-American culture, especially the know-how of the plantation kitchen. With her husband Alex she ran a successful San Francisco business in pickles and preserves, and published a fine collection of recipes, *What Mrs. Fisher Knows about Old Southern Cooking* (San Francisco, 1881).

Tipton-Martin observed that African-American cookbook authors outside the South tended to be more self-confident in breaking through the boundaries of stereotypical Southern cooking, developing elegant dishes and even delving into book printing as a fine art. Other cookbooks that she discussed include Kentucky-born Bertha L. Turner's *The Federation Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes, Contributed by the Colored Women of the State of California* (Pasadena, 1910); Mrs. W. T. Hayes, *Kentucky Cook Book, Easy and Simple for Any Cook* (St. Louis, 1912); Harriet Ross Colquitt, ed., *The Savannah Cook Book: A Collection of Old Fashioned Receipts from Colonial Kitchens* (Charleston, SC, 1933); Beatrice Hightower-Cates and the Negro Culinary Art Club of Los Angeles, *Eliza's Cook Book: Favorite Recipes* (1936); and Freda De Knight, *Favorite Carnation Recipes* (Carnation Company, Los Angeles, 1950's).

"Behind every bagel in the South, there's a story waiting to be told," declared **Marcie Cohen Ferris**, adding, "a story of cultural persistence." Ferris chronicled the history of Southern Jews from the perspective of the dinner table in her presentation, "Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South". She noted that her 2005 book of the same title was partly modeled after Linda Mack Schloff's *And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher: Jewish Women in the Upper Midwest since 1855* (1996).

Early on, the American Jewish Diaspora consisted of Sephardic immigrants settled in cities like Newport, RI, Savannah, GA, and Charleston, SC. Many of them followed the cotton trade and eventually moved to the interior of the country. Ferris observed that cookery was one of the ways the new immigrants held onto their identity. But with the lack of a suitable infrastructure and social network, newly arrived Jews often had to compromise or assimilate in order to sustain any semblance of their life and foodways, she said. Eventually, a rabbinical establishment, a network of synagogues, and a business in kosher items did arise.

During the Civil War, Jews and non-Jews alike suffered deprivations in all of the cities of the South. Many Jews supported the Confederacy, and as soldiers they were often able to maintain kosher eating. After the war, Jews played important and visible roles as traders and merchants. Yet because of their "otherness" and small numbers, they were often marginalized. With another minority, African Americans, they developed a complicated bond that sometimes included the sharing of recipes and cooking traditions.

*continued on next page*

**SYMPOSIUM***continued from previous page*

In the decades before and after 1900, the Jewish population swelled greatly with Ashkenazi immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. They tended to go into mercantile trades, including at deli's and other food purveyors. The rise of the Ku Klux Klan and nativist sentiment, especially following the lynching of Jewish businessman Leo Frank in Marietta, GA in 1915, fanned intolerance against black, Jewish, and other people. As a result of anti-Semitism, Jews were excluded from white institutions and were thereby knit more tightly together as a community. But at the same time, many coped by de-emphasizing their ethnicity and emulating mainstream white culture, including such things as ladies' luncheons, mixers for young people, etc. The effects on foodways could be subtle but telling. For instance, matzoh balls became smaller, more akin to the meatballs, croquettes, and dumplings of mainstream culture.

After World War 2, the Jewish population of the South shifted more and more from rural and small-town areas to larger cities in the North and South. As a result, synagogues in small towns began to close, while the Jewish communities in urban areas and the Sunbelt experienced growth. Memphis, for example, is home today to one of the largest and most vibrant Jewish populations. Its Barbecue Cooking Contest every May is world-famous, but Memphis is also host to— why not?— an annual Kosher Barbecue Contest, while a place called Corky's is a much-loved Jewish-owned barbecue joint in the city. In adapting culinary traditions from their heritage to the established foodways of the region, Jews have forged a new identity, blending the old world with the new.

This principle is also at work in the evolution of the *kugel*, a traditional Ashkenazi baked side-dish similar to a pudding or casserole, and which can be sweet or savory. Kugels have distinctive tastes and reflect the history, culture, regional influences, and ethnic identity of Jews. Ferris observed that traditional recipes for kugel and other dishes are handed down from one generation to the next, with adaptations of regional ingredients and flavors. Recipes that she has recovered— many of them gathered from her research in Mississippi, where she formerly lived, or bequeathed to her by ancestors in her home town of Blytheville, AR— include Rosh Hashanah hoppin' john, dirty matzo, Mississippi pecan kugel, Mississippi praline macaroons, and Pesach sponge cake.

**John T. Edge** brought lessons learned from 10 years' involvement with the Southern Foodways Alliance in his presentation, which traced the organization's serious yet playful approach to culinary history. In "Mouth of the South: The Southern Foodways Alliance at Ten", Edge described the problem faced after the first symposium on Southern foodways: how to deal with success. That conference was such a hit that organizers decided to form an organization, the Southern Foodways Alliance, whose mission is to document and celebrate the diverse food traditions of the region. To keep the focus on community and preserve intimacy, they resolved not to grow the conference but instead to increase the number of events held each year. Serious inquiry married with good eats, conversation, and passion has been the result. "If you're going to hold a conference on Southern food you have to be about the people and community", he said.

Located in Oxford, MS, the SFA has learned that serious-minded topics benefit from light titles. Seemingly incongruous *tchotchkes* and aphorisms belong side by side. Unlike other nonprofit food organizations, the SFA emphasizes people— the human resources of the world of food— more than ingredients, recipes, and dishes. A sense of place and the value of localisms guide its symposia, where individual and very personal stories are shared, accompanied by food and often by performances of blues or other Southern music.

In the South, where so much of people's sense of identity is bound up with food, talk about eating can range from the escapist to the expansive. The slogan "Cornbread Nation", which highlights both of these aspects, was adopted by the SFA from John Thorne's writings. Organizers have even found that the table is a good place to talk about issues of race, civil rights, and reconciliation. Something so simple as deviled eggs can open communication and understanding when people bring their own recipes and begin talking. Food can provide non-threatening leverage; when a common table is set for participants— black and white, rich and poor, urban and rural, white-tablecloth cooks and oil-cloth cooks— it gets them all communicating over a pleasurable shared experience.

This year, the SFA is producing seven films and about 100 oral histories. The group is famous for preserving the work of unsung cooks— the ones working on riverboats or in house restaurants, rib joints, or bars. To illustrate this point, Edge screened "Martin Sawyer, Bartender of New Orleans" (2005, c. 12 mins.), a wonderful documentary co-produced by the SFA. Sawyer, an African-American and 34-year veteran at the Rib Room Bar in the Omni New Orleans Hotel, reminisces about his life and work, and shows how to prepare such drinks as the Sazerac, the Ramos Gin Fizz, and his own invention, the Marsaw.

### The Midwest

Historian **Larry B. Massie**, a proud native of Michigan, outlined the culinary history of the state from its Native American beginnings through the rise of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. His presentation, "Rubaboo, Kalamazoo, and Pasties Too: Aspects of Michigan's Culinary Heritage", interwove the histories of the native and immigrant populations with the foods they ate and with national and economic issues.

The three main native tribes of what is now Michigan, known as the "three brothers", were the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa (Ojibwa). Their primary food staples, known as the "three sisters", were corn, beans, and squash. The basis of Native American sustenance, these agricultural crops were central to a culture that was in league with nature. The native Indians also utilized the forests and freshwater lakes and rivers in and around the peninsula by producing maple syrup and maple sugar, perfecting the harvesting of wild rice, and fishing (often with nets) for whitefish, sturgeon, grayling, and other species.

French explorer and navigator Samuel de Champlain and his followers first encountered the tribes of this region while searching for new waterways around 1620. Champlain was integral to opening North America to French trade, especially to trappers in search of the beaver pelts used to make men's top-

hats. One of the filling dishes of the early fur traders was *rubaboo*, a thick stew made from dried corn or peas mixed with water or grease and a thickening agent such as flour. To this was added *pemmican*, a mixture of dried, pounded buffalo meat with lard and berries.

During the westward expansion of the U.S., most European immigrants bypassed Michigan until the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. The immigrants— German, Irish, Polish, Dutch, and Scandinavian— flooded into Michigan from the Northeast via the canal, especially from the 1840's on. The new pioneers saw Michigan as a bountiful garden, and survived on such early staples as potatoes, cornmeal in its various forms (mush, pone bread, dodgers, johnnycakes, Indian pudding, etc.), maple syrup, honey, pork, passenger and other pigeons (eaten in pies), fish, and oysters. Danish immigrants, who were especially prominent as lumber-camp cooks, introduced the *ableskive* (apple-slice pastry) and other items. The copper rush of the 1840's brought thousands of miners to the state's Upper Peninsula (U.P.). Many miners were Cornish and would take a home-baked warm *pasty* with them into the mines as their standard lunch. The traditional Cornish pasty is a portable lard-based pastry encompassing beef, pork, potato, rutabaga, carrot, and onion, similar in size and shape to a large turnover. It is still popular today and forms part of the identity of Michiganders, especially in the U.P.

Dutch immigrants fleeing the increasingly liberal state church of the Netherlands settled around Kalamazoo, an area of western Michigan that was rich and marshy, similar to the land they left behind. They drained the soil and developed a profitable celery industry, leading the world in its production by the turn of the century. In contrast to the relatively bland Pascal celery that is prevalent today, these stalks grew mostly below ground and acquired a nutty flavor. They had a reputation as a sexual stimulant and a medicinal vegetable for the nerves, and were served with flourish on dining tables in ornate "celery vases" of clear glass. A wave of celery blight crippled the industry in the 1930's.

Religious groups, especially Mormons, spiritualists, Millerites, and Seventh-Day Adventists, had a marked impact on Michigan foodways. Massie described the evolution of Battle Creek, a town in southwestern Michigan, as a center of new spiritualism in the mid-1800's. Ellen G. White, who moved to Battle Creek in 1855, wrote and published the Adventist message and later began to communicate the vital role of diet and physical health in spiritual belief. She established the Western Health Reform Institute, a sanitarium promoting the merits of physical health, natural healing, proper diet, clean water, and sunshine. From the 1870's on, under the direction of Adventist surgeon John Harvey Kellogg, the Battle Creek sanitarium achieved worldwide fame. Kellogg, who believed that the colon is the seat of all human ailments, promoted health foods and vegetarianism, patented an early form of peanut butter, and invented corn flakes cereal. C. W. Post, who spent time at the sanitarium for his failing health, would invent Postum (a nutritious coffee substitute), Grape Nuts, Post Toasties, and other cereals that became part of the Post empire. Besides Kellogg's and Post, many, many other cereal and grain producers arose in western Michigan at this time. Breakfast cereals were an early "convenience food" that helped free women from some of the drudgery of home cooking.

Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, famous for celery and cereal, respectively, provided important economic development and jobs for the largely rural state. Currently, the agri-foods sector is the second largest economic sector in Michigan, after the auto industry.

In "What's for Lunch and Why: Artisanal Cheeses in Wisconsin", **Ari Weinzwieg** offered a series of personal observations from his recent travels to research the history of Wisconsin cheese and discover the current state of cheesemaking in this traditional cheese production center of America. Weinzwieg, the co-founder of Zingerman's Deli and Zingerman's Community of Businesses, is a former president of the American Cheese Society. He noted that he'd especially learned from conversations with Sam and Myrna Cook, the nonagenarian cheesemakers behind Carr Valley Cheese Co. in La Valle, WI, whose son Sid has become well-known for helping to revive artisanal cheese practices there. Weinzwieg's presentation immediately preceded, and served to whet the audience's appetite for, the fine six-cheese buffet provided by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board to accompany the box lunches that his deli supplied for that day at the symposium.

Wisconsin cheese production was born out of failure. Frontier settlers' attempts to raise wheat failed in the 1860's, and they were forced to look for new ways to earn income. They brought cows in from Ohio to establish a different kind of farming and diet. Dairying became a successful commercial enterprise, and cheese was an additional way to earn cash from milk. Cheese making developed along industrial lines; unlike in Europe, in Wisconsin there was very little farmhouse cheese making. As early as 1841, a Wisconsin woman had started a cheese cooperative, but the role of women in cheese making became circumscribed as the nature of production shifted from domestic to commercial and especially to industrial.

What was probably the first large-scale cheese factory in Wisconsin was established in 1864 in Ladoga, near Fond du Lac (the first in the world had been established in Rome, NY in 1851). There were 90 cheese factories in Wisconsin by 1870; over 1,100 in 1890; over 2,800 in 1922, the peak year; and only 115 today. Traditionally, the factories were sited about five miles apart, the maximum distance that allowed farmers to deliver their milk quickly and return to their farms to complete daily chores. By 1929 there were 129,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin to support cheese production; in 1953, the number peaked at 143,000.

Most Wisconsin cheeses were made in styles adapted from Europe, although there were a few local inventions such as brick and Colby. However, the role of cheese in local culture diverged greatly from the traditions from which it sprang. Cheese making in Wisconsin was not a craft passed down generationally; instead, it was thought of as a reliable factory job, similar to working in the auto plants in Michigan. Milk from many different dairies was pooled together in the production of a single cheese, so the quality of milk from individual farmers became less important. In addition, cheese did not form part of *cooking* traditions per se, as it had in Europe. Cheese in the U.S. was eaten young, without much aging; in fact, raw curds are the most popular way to eat cheese in Wisconsin today. The European tradition of aging did not suit American production schedules, and selling cheeses more quickly meant more profit. The objec-

*continued on next page*

## SYMPOSIUM *continued from previous page*

tive was to produce milk, make cheese, and sell it as soon as possible. Led by giants like Kraft and Borden, in the 1950's the industry shifted from cloth-wrapped wheels to square blocks wrapped in paraffin, weighing 40 or 60 pounds. Today, 640-pound blocks are standard.

Despite these trends, Weinzweig sees a bright future for Wisconsin cheeses. Artisanal cheese makers are producing great, flavorful cheese there again. He believes Wisconsin is letting go of the "bigger is better" myth of success. This could be great for Wisconsin, with cheese—artisanally made this time—again leading the way.

### The West

"In the Midst of Plenty: Pacific Northwest Foodways" was the title of a presentation by **Jacqueline Williams**. She argued that while this region cannot claim a set of characteristic dishes or food types, the unusual bounty of fruits, vegetables, and other food sources has played a determining role in its cuisine.

The evolving use of salmon and potatoes made interesting case studies presented by Williams. Salmon, along with other types of fish including herring and halibut, was the "staff of life" in the aboriginal diet of the coast and the Columbia River valley, as documented by explorers Lewis and Clark and, over a century later, by ethnographers Erna Gunther and Marian W. Smith. For native tribes, salmon was not simply a dietary item but a focus of sacred reverence, celebrations, and trade. They caught and cooked five different species of salmon; preserved its flesh by drying or smoking; and used the roe as a pungent addition to other foods. European settlers, notably the Scandinavians, preserved salmon by pickling in vinegar, and they also established canneries early on.

The potato was brought to the Northwest by Spanish and English settlers in the 1790's. Local tribes quickly appreciated it, for the tubers could be cultivated and pit-roasted much like their native *quamash* (camass) bulbs. When American settlers began arriving in quantity in the 1840's-50's, mostly from the Midwestern and Southern states, the Indians' success with the potato became a factor in the newcomers' coveting their land and herding them onto reservations. Whites preferred to boil and mash rather than roast potatoes, and Scandinavian-Americans liked to combine them with meat or sausage.

The Americans also learned to exploit local fish, ducks, clams, oysters, deer, rabbit, game birds, and berries. Oyster pan roast, for instance, is a dish from Olympia in the Washington Territory. Wheat cultivation and cattle raising, the latter especially important for dairy products, proved most feasible in the drier lands east of the Cascades. Subsequent immigration of Japanese, Jewish, and other ethnic groups exerted a later influence on the cuisine. Williams also briefly reviewed regional cookbooks, including Seattle's earliest, *Clever Cooking* (St. Mark's Church Women's Guild, 1896); she edited a reprint of this Episcopal charity cookbook for Applewood Press in 2006.

**Dan Strehl** reviewed the history of cookery and cookbooks in California and the Southwest in his talk "Hon-dah a la Fiesta: The Immigrant Cuisines of the American Southwest". In this region, new foodways were grafted onto a native diet that was

based on such staples as corn, beans, and acorn gruel. Three successive waves of Spanish settlement introduced ingredients like chilies, potatoes, chickpeas, fava beans, olives, figs and other fruits, as well as the meat and milk of sheep, goats, and cattle. Typical results of this grafting included tortillas made from wheat flour (rather than native cornmeal), and *machaca*, or sun-dried strips of beef. French-influenced *haute cuisine* also played a role in regional gastronomy, as did the Anglos who flocked in from New England and elsewhere following the Mexican War (1848) and the Gold Rush (1849). Subsequent waves of immigration included groups like the Chinese, Armenians, Koreans, and Thais.

The first cookbook with characteristically California ingredients and recipes was probably *Clayton's Quaker Cook-Book* (Women's Co-Operative Printing Office of San Francisco, 1883) by local chef H. J. Clayton. The earliest known cookbook in the U.S. written by a Hispanic person is *El Cocinero Español* (E. C. Hughes, San Francisco, 1898) by Encarnación Pinedo, a woman from a wealthy local family; Strehl translated and published selections under the title *Encarnación's Kitchen* (Univ. of California Press, 2003). Other landmarks that he discussed include *The Unrivalled Cookbook of Los Angeles* (1902) by the Ladies of the Temple Bazaar, the first Jewish cookbook in California; *Chinese and English Cook Book* (San Francisco, 1910), a "pointy-talky" bilingual cookbook of Anglo and European recipes, designed so that an affluent family could point to a dish and ask their Chinese servant to prepare it; Genevieve A. Callahan's *Sunset All-Western Cook Book* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1933); Adelle Davis's *Let's Cook It Right: Good Health Comes from Good Cooking* (New York, 1947); and *Helen Brown's West Coast Cookbook* (Boston, 1952). ■

## A Rare Find: Malinda Russell

Six years ago, Jan Longone rocked the culinary history community when she announced, in a column in *Gastronomica* 1:1 (Feb. 2001), her discovery of a copy of *A Domestic Cook Book* by Tennessee native Malinda Russell. This work, which had been printed in Paw Paw, Michigan, in 1866, quickly assumed its place as the earliest-known African-American published book devoted solely to cookery. Among the many interesting aspects of Russell's book is that the great majority of her recipes are for sweets and baked goods, from "Steamed Indian Pudding" to "White Mountain Cake".

Now, in conjunction with its recent Symposium, the William L. Clements Library has published a complete facsimile edition of this extremely rare work. The facsimile is a 50-page booklet, and has been furnished by Longone with an introduction and index.

Copies are \$25, plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling. Checks should be made out to "University of Michigan, Clements Library-Culinary" and sent to the Longone Center for American Culinary Research, Clements Library, University of Michigan, 909 S. University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1190. Further information, including a form for fax and credit-card orders, can be obtained at [www.clements.umich.edu/culinary](http://www.clements.umich.edu/culinary) or by contacting the library at 734-764-2347 or [clements@umich.edu](mailto:clements@umich.edu).



**DUTCH OVENS***continued from page 6*

[...]

Sometimes the cook used the Dutch bake-oven which everyone knows,— a shallow iron pot, with a close fitting iron cover upon which you can pile a great thickness of coals, or can build a miniature fire. Having greased the inside of the oven with a bacon-rind, bread bakes quickly and safely.<sup>22</sup>

My experience is that ovens “jammed” in the coals may cause overheating of the bottom of the oven, scorching the food, but this was the report given. I have found that it is easier to control the heat if you do not place the oven directly on a bed of coals, but move coals to it from the main source.

Well documented is the use of Dutch ovens in the ranching areas of the western part of the country. The ovens were used during round-ups and cattle drives. Around 1900 there are paintings and drawings by Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington. Many of the photographs taken by Erwin E. Smith from about 1908-10 show the mobile cooking areas in ranches in the west.<sup>23</sup> In the reports I have seen, the most frequently mentioned food to be cooked in these ranch ovens was bread (loaf bread, rye and Indian bread, corn pones, corn bread, biscuits, and dodgers). Beyond these bread items I found reports of ovens used for cookies, beans, soups, stews, potatoes, cobbles, and cakes. The slow cooking of the Dutch oven allowed the adequate cooking of all of those foods.

The period from 1860 to 1890 was a time of long trail drives when cattle were constantly being moved from the grass ranges to the market to be sold for beef. The trail cooks usually served beef, beans, and sourdough biscuits as their mainstays. Using an active sourdough starter, the biscuits were often daily fare that was welcomed by the crews of cowboys.<sup>24</sup>

The chuck wagon was the vital cooking center for providing meals to these mobile trail and ranch workers. Charles Goodnight is credited with constructing the first model in 1866. He started with a standard government wagon, which featured a bed of seasoned wood that rolled on iron axles. This was furnished with extra sideboards, and arching bows over the top to support a canvas sheet. A chuck box was built on the back. This box generally had shelves and drawers to store small utensils and condiments, and a back piece that folded down to provide a work table. Below the chuck box, some wagons had another box or shelf for storing Dutch ovens and other pots and skillets.<sup>25</sup>

Dan Moore reported on an Arizona ranch area where most of the wagons for the cattle trails carried cast-iron ovens that were anywhere from 10 to 20 inches in diameter. In some areas where mountain terrain would prevent wagons from traveling, Dutch ovens were brought in on horses or mules. Not too surprisingly, in one camp, the cook, who used several Dutch ovens, was called Dutchy.<sup>26</sup>

#### Decline and Renewal of the Dutch Oven

Wide use of Dutch ovens continued on through the 1800's, but the introduction of wood stoves about 1840-1850 started a decline in their use. This was accelerated with the wide

acceptance of gas and electric stoves about 1900. Even then, many places in remote areas still used Dutch ovens for stewing and baking. Some households equipped with wood stoves would nevertheless use a small Dutch oven in the fireplace when coals were present there, saving the time and fuel needed to fire up the wood stove.

In 1993 I interviewed a lady near Mountain View, Arkansas, who still did some cooking in her Dutch oven. She and her husband, both in their 80's, reported that their oven was well over 100 years old and had been in his family those years. The 12-inch oven had a gate (a narrow line projection resulting from the casting method) on the bottom of the oven and on the lid, and had “cow's horn” ears, all consistent with an early-vintage oven. She reported that the primary foods she now baked in the oven were biscuits and turkey legs. It was October when I visited this couple; they had a bed of coals in the fireplace and the oven was on the hearth.

I am convinced that the renewed interest in the use of Dutch ovens began in 1938 at the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in northeastern New Mexico. The Ranch was planning details for the first summer camp operations for 1939. In seeking local historical items to use in the camping program, they decided to make Dutch ovens available for outdoor baking. The ovens had been in wide use on the ranches of the territory. This was confirmed to me in 1989 in a conversation with Minor S. Huffman, who had been a Scout Executive in that area when the Philmont Scout Ranch was established. Thus, thousands of young men and young women were exposed to the use of Dutch ovens there. Then those young people returned home, and many subsequently acquired ovens and used them in Scout units in their local communities. They also have appreciated the use of the ovens for their other outdoor cooking needs.

Act 476 of the 2001 Arkansas Legislature designated THE DUTCH OVEN AS THE OFFICIAL STATE HISTORIC COOKING VESSEL. The Act was signed by the Governor on February 28, 2001. There is an Arkansas Dutch Oven Society that is involved in teaching and demonstrating uses of the Dutch oven.

Today, thousands of campers use Dutch ovens. With this vessel they can fry, brown, steam, stew, or bake. In multiple hardware stores or camping-goods stores you can find the ovens. Around many camping sites, you can find people preparing delicious meals with this portable cooking vessel. ■

#### Endnotes

1. For more on the early evolution of Dutch ovens, see John G. Ragsdale, “Dutch Ovens: Mobile Cooking Vessels”, *Proceedings of the 1997 ALHFAM Conference* (North Bloomfield, OH: Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums, 1997).
2. For more details, see John G. Ragsdale, *Dutch Ovens Chronicled: Their Use in the United States* (Fayetteville, AR: Phoenix International, Inc., 2004), pp. 3, 13-14.
3. William P. Palmer, ed., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781*, Vol. 1 (Richmond, VA: R. F. Walker, Supt. of Public Printing, 1875), p. 387.

*continued on next page*

**DUTCH OVENS** *continued from previous page*

4. J. Wayne Fears, "The Dutch Oven Tradition", *Sports Afield*, October 1985, pp. 94ff.
5. Elizabeth E. Lea, *Domestic Cookery, Useful Receipts, and Hints to Young Housekeepers* (Baltimore, MD: Cushings and Bailey, 1851), pp. 58-59.
6. Eliza Leslie, *New Cookery Book* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1857), p. 402.
7. Several years ago I donated this oven, which I had purchased from an antiques dealer, to the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock. I included a photo of this oven in my *Dutch Ovens Chronicled*, p. 67.
8. Linda Campbell Franklin, *America in the Kitchen from Hearth to Cookstoves* (Florence, AL: House of Collectibles, Inc., 1976), p. 78.
9. Wilbur G. Ziegler and Ben S. Grosscup, *The Heart of the Alleghanies; or, Western North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Alfred Williams & Co., 1883), p. 151. For more details on Appalachian Dutch-oven traditions, see Linda Garland Page and Eliot Wigginton, eds., *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery: Regional Memorabilia and Recipes* (New York: E. P. Dutton, Inc., 1984).
10. Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *The Bark Covered House or, Back in the Woods Again* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1937), p. 113.
11. As reported by Frances Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens, Their Furnishings, and Their Gardens* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1972), p. 242.
12. Baynard Rush Hall [Robert Carlton, Esq.], *The New Purchase, or, Seven and a Half Years in the Far West*, ed. James Albert Woodburn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1916), p. 54.
13. G. D. Brewerton, "In the Buffalo Country", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, June-November 1862, p. 464.
14. Nathaniel H. Bishop, *Four Months in a Sneak-Box* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1879), p. 145.
15. Samuel H. Chester, *Pioneer Days in Arkansas* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1927), p. 18.
16. Marion E. Watkins, *Capitol of Polk County: Pioneer Life and Customs* (Mena, AR: M. K. Watkins, 1958), p. 7.
17. Cora Pinkley Call, *Pioneer Tales of Eureka Springs and Carroll County* (Eureka Springs, AR: privately published, 1930), p. 30.
18. Patrick Dunnahoo, *A Tol'able Plenty: Pioneer Farm Life in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas* (Benton, AR: Alright Printing Company, 1982), p. 60.
19. Patrick Dunnahoo, *Cotton, Cornbread and Cape Jasmines: Early Day Life on the Plantations of the Arkansas River Delta* (Benton, AR: published privately, 1985), pp. 248-9.
20. A few of the examples that can be cited are those found in Everett Dick, *The Sod-House Frontier 1854-1890* (Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1937, 1954, 1989), p. 250; John Marvin Hunter, *Cooking Recipes of the Pioneers* (Bandera, TX: Frontier Times, 1936), pp. 3, 9, 12; and Elliott West, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1989), p. 53.
21. Franklin, p. 78.
22. Ernest Ingersoll, "Rocky Mountain Cookery", *Scribner's Monthly*, 20:1 (May 1880), p. 128.
23. The Erwin E. Smith Collection of photographs is owned by the Library of Congress and on deposit at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, TX. Three of these photos are reproduced and described in my *Dutch Ovens Chronicled*, pp. 46-51.
24. Don Worcester, *The Chisholm Trail: High Road of the Cattle Kingdom* (Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 74.
25. Wayne Gard, *The Chisholm Trail* (Norman, OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 120-1.
26. Dan Moore, *Shoot Me a Biscuit: Stories of Yesteryear's Roundup Cooks* (Tucson, AZ: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1974), pp. 3, 23. More details of camp cooking on the western rangelands can be found in my *Dutch Ovens Chronicled*, pp. 29-31.

**ETHNIC FOOD***continued from page 8*

**A sample of menu suggestions from the 1949 edition of La Choy's *The Art and Secrets of Chinese Cooking*,**

upon his old college buddy when his customers started demanding more fresh vegetables. New, a veteran mung bean sprouter, invented a way to grow bean sprouts in a bathtub and seal them in glass jars. Although the pair soon switched to metal cans and eventually relocated their operations to a fancy, high-tech processing plant, sprouts remained a staple of *Art and Secret's* recipes long after New had left the company and Smith was tragically killed by lightning in 1937. Sprouts figured prominently in a quintessentially Jazz Age "combination salad" recipe, first printed in 1925, which called for one cup of sprouts and one-half cup of celery, layered with radishes and cucumbers and dressed with a thick coat of mayonnaise flavored with soy sauce.

That 1925 edition of *Art and Secrets* acknowledged its ethnic influences with a cover depicting an Asian server setting a dining room table. Visible through the window is a cocktail party of white guests apparently awaiting the dinner bell. But by 1929, the Asian server had been banished in an apparent push to reassure housewives that their genes couldn't keep them from making a mean chow mein. The 1929 cover features a white woman in a red dress and green apron standing over a counter from which La Choy products are conspicuously absent. She has nothing but a mixing bowl, water pitcher, onions and radishes from which to produce dishes like Chinese Fried Chicken with Chinese Brown Gravy. While Chinese food was "hitherto the despair of even the most adept chefs", La Choy has made the cuisine easy-to-prepare and good-for-you (although a 1932 vow that Chinese food is "not fattening" was reworded five years later to read "not particularly fattening").

The booklet's cover changed many times, but an Asian figure did not reappear until 1949, when the previous edition's cover girl—a little tow-headed scamp dressed in Chinese-esque garb and a frilly apron—was replaced by a pigtailed Chinese chef. By 1957, Chinese characters graced the cover.

The recipes included in *Art and Secrets* tell us very little about how folks eat in China, just as Gebhardt's 1932 recipe for Mexican chop suey was probably never enjoyed south of the border. But the booklets, and their evolution, tell us a great deal about how people in this country came to accept and cherish what they called ethnic food. ■

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

Food writer **Molly O'Neill** has just published *American Food Writing: An Anthology with Classic Recipes* (New York: Library of America, 2007; 753 pp., \$40 cloth). Organized chronologically and covering a period of more than 250 years, the volume collects over 100 diverse pieces of writing about food: e.g., Meriwether Lewis on making buffalo-meat *boudin blanc*, M. F. K. Fisher on the best ways to eat oysters, Alice B. Toklas assessing American cuisine in 1934-5, Joseph Wechsberg on dining at Le Pavillon, Edna Lewis on a hog-butcher breakfast, Raymond Sokolov on Yankee clambakes, James Villas on waiting tables, and Michael Pollan on industrialized food. Also included are more than 50 classic recipes, such as corn bread (Tunis Campbell), potato pudding (Esther Levy), hamburger steak (Sarah Tyson Rorer), and *moong dal* (Madhur Jaffrey).

In an all-languages, all-continent competition, **Joan Peterson**, founding member of the Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin (CHEW), and her co-author **Brook Soltvedt**, captured first place in the Culinary Travel Guidebook category at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, presented in Beijing this past April 7. Their award-winning book was *Eat Smart in Peru: How to Decipher the Menu, Know the Market Foods & Embark on a Tasting Adventure* (Madison, WI: Ginkgo Press, 2006; 160 pp., \$13.95 paper). Joan's previous works in the Eat Smart series include guides to Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Turkey, India, and Indonesia.

On May 7 **Rick and Deann Bayless**, old friends of the CHAA, won the James Beard Foundation's 2007 Outstanding Restaurant award for their acclaimed Frontera Grill in Chicago, IL. Catering to a North American audience both as chef/owners and as authors, the Baylesses have worked for decades to reclaim and popularize authentic Mexican cooking.

"The Secret Life of Mrs. Beeton", an historical drama about **Isabella Beeton**, the famous compiler of household manuals, was recently televised, locally on May 20. The drama, set in mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century England, focused most poignantly on the ups and downs of Beeton's married life. The 90-minute show, part of the PBS-TV series "Masterpiece Theatre", starred **Anna Madeley** and was produced by **Jessica Pope** for WGBH in Boston. It was based on the biography by **Kathryn Hughes**, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton* (see this column, Summer 2006).

The exhibit "Soul Food! African American Cooking and Creativity" has moved on to the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art in Memphis, TN, where it will run through August 19, 2007. The exhibit was organized by **Olivia White** at the Amistad Center for Art & Culture (Hartford, CT), and ran there from Nov. 15, 2006 to Apr. 22, 2007 (see this column, Fall 2006). The art and artifacts trace African American visual culture and its relationship to culinary traditions and American history. The objects on display include photos and other historical artifacts, iconic examples of early advertising, and contemporary works by internationally recognized artists.

"Ice Cream: Our Cool Obsession" is a major exhibit running May 26, 2007 – October 31, 2008 at the Farmers'

Museum in Cooperstown, NY. Historian **Suzan D. Friedlander** served as guest curator. The exhibit traces the history from primitive water ices in ancient times to domestic and eventually commercial production of ice cream; the technological advances that made possible the rich products of modern times; related social customs; the democratization of ice cream in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; the development of novelties and brands; and more recent forms of globalization in the ice cream industry. Artifacts include contemporary and historical photographs, a traditional ice cream parlor, Schwan's first delivery truck, and Ben and Jerry's original freezer.

**Kenneth F. Kiple**, professor of history at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, recently completed *A Movable Feast: Ten Millennia of Food Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; 384 pp., \$27 cloth). Kiple is perhaps best known as co-editor of *The Cambridge World History of Food* (2000) and for several studies on the role of diet, disease, and racism in the transatlantic slave trade. In his new book, he argues that the global dissemination of foodways is not something new at all. Major topics include the prehistoric spread of domesticated plants and animals; the acquisitive cuisines of Roman, Islamic, and other empires; the Columbian exchange; the mercantile trade in sugar, cacao, coffee, tea, and spices; and the borrowings, fusions— even homogenization— resulting from modern immigration, restaurants, and supermarkets.

An international research team led by **Alice A. Storey**, an anthropologist at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, has discovered that chickens were first introduced to South America in pre-Columbian times— and thus not, as most scholars had believed, by Spanish and Portuguese settlers. The findings were published in May in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Based on chemical and genetic analysis of chicken bones found at archaeological sites in Chile and on islands in the Pacific, the team concluded that the domestic chicken, which is known to have originated in Asia, was brought across the ocean by Polynesians traveling in canoes in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century CE or earlier. The travelers also transplanted some foods in the opposite direction, notably the sweet potato.

Recent discoveries mentioned in this column— regarding chickens (above) and chilies (in our last issue)— exemplify how archaeologists are developing new ways to learn about prehistoric, historic, and contemporary foodways. Significantly, the 40<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the **Chacmool Archaeological Association** is being organized this year around the theme "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: The Archaeology of Foodways". Its goal is to examine the many ways to understand eating, feasting, sustenance, and food preparation. The conference will be held Nov. 10-12, 2007 at the University of Calgary, Alberta. For more information, visit <http://arky.ucalgary.ca/Chacmool2007>.

**On the Back-burner:** We invite ideas and submissions for these planned future theme-issues of *Repast*: Foods of the American South (Fall 2007); Fairs, Festivals, and Cook-offs (Winter 2008); The Revival of Native American Cooking (Spring 2008); Evolution of Foodways in the Middle East (Summer 2008); Scandinavian-American Food Traditions (Fall 2008). Suggestions for future themes are also welcome. ■

# CHAA CALENDAR

---

---

(Except where noted, programs are scheduled for 4-6 p.m. at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

Sunday, July 29, 2007

4-7 p.m., Earhart Village Clubhouse  
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)  
CHAA annual participatory theme picnic  
“Sandwiches from Around the World”

Sunday, September 16, 2007

3-5 p.m., Rentschler Farm Museum  
(1265 E. Michigan Ave., Saline, MI)  
Agnes Dikeman, Saline Area Historical Society  
Tour of Depression-era farmstead and kitchen

Sunday, October 21, 2007

Laura Meisler, Education Coordinator for  
the People’s Food Cooperative, Ann Arbor  
“History of Food Cooperatives and  
the Natural Food Movement”  
(tentative)

Sunday, November 18, 2007

TBA

Sunday, December 9, 2007

4-7 p.m., Everyday Cook event space  
(410 N. Fifth Ave., Kerrytown, Ann Arbor)  
CHAA annual participatory theme dinner  
“A French Bistro Evening”

REPAST  
1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722



Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Volume XXIII Number 3, Summer 2007

*First Class*